



MEMORANDUM

To: Dan Miles, Chairman and Leisa Smith, Executive Director, Montana SWIB
From: Lindsey Woolsey, CSW
Date: October 14, 2008
Re: SWIB Strategic Planning Follow-up and Initial Recommendations

It was a pleasure working with the SWIB on September 25th in Helena. I think the plans developed by Board members for the SWIB's 2008-09 priority areas will set the SWIB on a promising course for achieving change, maintaining momentum and building influence of the SWIB in statewide workforce related issues.

I wanted to follow up with a summary of your work, as well as some recommendations which may prove immediately useful. This memo and its attachments include:

- ◆ A draft "living" Plan of Action in Excel format that outlines the tasks identified by Board members within the SWIB's 3 priority areas for action over the next 12 months;
- ◆ A draft power point presentation that offers a way to share the SWIB's priorities and plan of action with a) Board members not present on September 25th; b) the Governor and relevant staff; and c) Other stakeholders;
- ◆ A set of specific recommendations as you move forward, including immediate next steps for the SWIB to undertake; and
- ◆ A summary of notes (embedded into this memo – i.e. not an attachment) from the September 25th meeting that give context to the draft Plan of Action and draft power point presentation.

The Plan of Action and Power point presentation should be considered suggested formats and drafts subject to your changes, additions, and edits that make them "your own." I hope, however, that they provide a starting point.

I look forward to discussing these in detail, to answering your questions, and to further assisting during our to-be-scheduled de-brief call. I also look forward to offering links and resources that will be useful to the priority areas the SWIB has selected as the Workgroups begin meeting and determining specific needs for further technical assistance.

SWIB Strategic Priorities and Plan of Action – Excel Format

The Excel format Plan of Action is the primary outcome of the September 25th meeting. It is a draft or skeletal plan. As we discussed at that meeting, there are still decisions to be made and gaps to be filled. You will notice blank areas in the Plan of Action that relate to these decisions and gaps.

Immediate decisions need to be made regarding:

- Which private sector Board member will act as the “Champion” of this priority area? Remember, the “Champion” is not responsible for doing the work of the workgroup, but acts as Chair of the workgroup, and is accountable to the Board for updates and forward-movement. The Chair of the workgroup should also sit on the SWIB Executive Committee.
- Which SWIB staff person will act as Co-Chair of this workgroup? What other public sector or non-business members or needed non-members sit on this workgroup?

Each workgroup will need to then consider the following questions, and should discuss these at their first meeting (face-to-face or virtual):

- Look at the actions in the Plan of Action: Is this what we said? Is this what we meant? What is unclear? What is missing? What doesn’t work about timing?
- Have we considered how we will give special attention to our 3 priority industries: Energy, Early Childcare and Education, and Healthcare? If not, how can we?
- Have we considered how to use Community Action Teams, One-stops, and other local or state partners to help us achieve our 12-month and longer term goals? If not, how can we?
- How realistic is the resource (\$) identification so far? What do we have currently? Where do we need more? Where will we have challenges securing additional resources? How can we get around this? Can we leverage multi-agency funds? What can get done without funding?
- What is our first step? Where do we want to be by January, the next SWIB meeting? When does this workgroup meet next, or by when do we report back on our immediate tasks?

SWIB 2008-2009 Strategic Agenda – Power Point Presentation Format

This presentation is offered as a suggested initial format for sharing with stakeholders the recent strategic planning activities of the SWIB. This can be used to:

- Introduce the 3 priority areas for action over the next 12 months, and the rationale behind their selection;
- Remind stakeholders of the SWIB’s mission, vision and role in Montana; and

- Increase visibility of the SWIB across relevant systems (workforce development, education, economic development, the Governor's office, business).

As with the Excel format Plan of Action, this presentation is a *DRAFT*, and should be edited and vetted with the Executive Committee if it is used.

You will notice that the mission, vision and roles of the SWIB as presented in this PowerPoint have been revised to incorporate language from: the Governor's priorities, the SWIB's "stated purpose" and "mission statement," and the discussion on September 25th by Members. **You may like the language and intent of the presentation, or you may not!** I encourage you to review for both accuracy and "fit" for what you believe the SWIB to be. Revise as needed.

Specific Recommendations for SWIB to Consider

SWIB Structure:

The discussion at the September 25th meeting raised important questions about the most effective structure for moving the Action Plan forward. Based on the Action Plan's content, the discussion at the meeting, and CSW's experience with other states, we recommend the following:

- **Keep it simple:** Executive Committee, WIA Committee, 3 Workgroups
- **Keep it flexible:** Use the access you have to technology to meet virtually, saving the face-to-face time for the 3-per-year SWIB meetings.
- **What happened to the One-Stop and Economic Development Committees?**
 - Consider that both topics are *inherent* in the SWIB's activities and decisions, and should be treated not as distinct topics (and therefore Committees), but as everyday business. The Executive Committee, WIA Committee and the 3 Workgroups should be discussing connections to economic development and appropriate use/training of the One-stops as part of their regular discussions and decisions.
 - Consider that the One-Stop Committee served its purpose. Now that the certification process is established, it should be viewed as a "tool" by the SWIB to implement the actions in their Priority areas.
- **What is the role of the Executive Committee?**
 - WIA is *not* the role of the Executive Committee. That is the role of the WIA Committee.
 - The role of the Executive Committee is to track and assist the implementation of the 3 Priority areas; to fit the priority areas into longer term goals and the SWIB's vision.
 - The Executive Committee should consist of: Chair, Director, the 3 Workgroup private sector Chairs (the "Champions"), and public sector members considered key to the implementation of the 3 Priorities.

- **Each Priority Area should be tackled by a Workgroup.**
 - Each Workgroup should be Chaired by a private sector member (the “Champion”) and co-Chaired by a staff member.
 - Other members should be selected based on a) interest in the topic; and b) expertise, connections, and resources relevant to the priority area.
 - Workgroups should conduct their work between SWIB meetings (virtually) and at SWIB meetings (face-to-face time).
- **A WIA Committee should be formed to handle WIA and related business.**
 - This Committee should consist of key staff and *volunteers (appointing members is not recommended)* from the Board membership. It should also consist of relevant L&I staff that bring expertise and background needed for decisions.
 - All WIA business decisions should be made by this Committee. Issues, decisions and rationales should be summarized in 1-page updates that are sent to Members prior to SWIB meetings. At the beginning of each 3-per-year SWIB meeting, dedicate 5 minutes to “Any questions about the update?” but not to the update itself (i.e. no presentations), which members had as pre-reading.
 - For issues that require a Board vote, SWIB staff should ask members to let them know what is unclear to them about the issue *prior* to the meeting. Discuss and handle this on a one-on-one basis. *This is not fail-proof, but will limit “bogging down” in WIA, and will be very appreciated by private sector members. Remember, they are engaged because of bigger issues, not WIA. The real work of the Board should be focused on the 3 Priority areas and Action Plan.*
 - Exceptions to this may include items such as Passing a Budget or Passing a 5-year Plan.

Immediate Next Steps:

- Re-visit Executive Committee Structure
- Determine Workgroups: Chair, Co-Chair, Members, 1st meeting
- Determine WIA Committee membership (by volunteers)
- Outreach to those not present at Sept 25 meeting
- Outreach to other stakeholders as needed

Suggestions for January SWIB Meeting:

- Each SWIB meeting should be considered a “mini” version of the September 25th event.
- 30 minutes at the beginning should be dedicated to: introductions, Q&A about any business updates sent out.
- 30 minutes needs to go toward group-wide consensus on 3 long-term (3-4 years) impact statements that capture the activities across the 3 priority areas. This is still a missing piece to the SWIB’s strategic plan, which should have the

following elements: Vision, Mission, 3 long-term Impact statements, Priority areas with 12-month goals.

- 45 minutes to an hour should be dedicated to face-to-face time for Workgroups.
- An hour should be dedicated to group-wide discussions of Workgroups' progress, decisions to be made, needed resources and actions, and a review of the SWIB's vision and long term goals.
- The meeting should end with a quick review of "Where We're At" and immediate next steps.

Summary of Other Notes from September 25, 2008 SWIB Meeting

Board Members Present: Dan Miles, Chair; Elsie Arntzen; Dave Crum; Connie Eissinger; TJ Eyer (*designee*); Mike Grove; Kirk Hammerquist; Jacquie Helt; Hank Hudson (*designee*); Keith Kelly; Maureen Kenneally; Robbe Lindsay; Mike McGinley; Thomas McKenna; Joan Miles; Sandi Miller; Gary Morehouse (*designee*); Gail Richardson; Pat Wise (*designee*); and Linda Woods.

Board Members Absent: Marty Copps, Vice Chair; Evan Barrett; John Brueggeman; Arlene Becker; Thomas Curry; Mike DesRosier; Georgia Gibbs-Atkinson; George Kipp; Lane Larson; Linda McCulloch; Rodney Miller; Mike O'Neill; Tony Preite; Jeff Rupp; Alan Skari; Karen Sullivan; and Jeff Tochihara.

The full-day Strategic Planning session was well attended, and participating Board members seemed pleased to be a part of an exercise to better focus the overall goals and activities of the SWIB. The goal of the day was:

To design a 12-month plan around a set of Board priority areas, including 12-month goals and action steps to achieve them, and to imagine longer term impacts (3 to 5 years) of SWIB achievements within those areas.

One member commented at the day's opening that the event was "a breath of fresh air" compared to past Boards where we did not "know what we were doing." A closing comment was "We know where we're going."

After introductions, members reviewed eleven potential priority areas, determined over the course of prior SWIB meetings and committee work. The eleven areas were: Apprenticeship, Montana Career Clusters/Big Sky Pathways, Clean and Green, Early Childcare and Education, Economic Development and Workforce Development, Incumbent Worker Training Program, Legislative, One-Stop, Restoration and Reclamation, Vocational Education in Middle/High Schools, and WorkKeys (or Work Readiness more broadly).

In the process of clarifying and discussing the eleven potential areas, the Board became conscious of some “miss-fits.” Some priority areas were less “areas for action” and were instead either: 1) Specific pre-determined priority industries; or 2) Elements of SWIB infrastructure or tools at the SWIB’s disposal that might *move* priority areas forward. Members therefore re-categorized these into the following:

<i>Priority Industries:</i> <i>To be considered industries of focus in all SWIB action areas.</i>	<i>Tools to Get Things Done:</i> <i>To be considered by the SWIB as mechanisms to achieve results in action areas.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy – Clean & Green and Restoration & Reclamation • Healthcare • Early Childcare and Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-Stop certification and performance criteria • The connections and dialogue inherent in the SWIB across Workforce and Economic Development • The Governor’s Office and the Legislature

Members also *began* to identify a set of core principles or values that the SWIB should operate under, regardless of priority area of action.

Core Principles:

- *When discussing workforce development, we assume the “system” is a partnership across workforce development, education, economic development and business. The system is not just “WIA.”*
- *The needs of Montana’s small communities must be considered in every action and decision made by the SWIB.*
- *Language we use when discussing SWIB activities and goals within the Board and outside should be clear, easy to understand, and free of acronyms.*

After re-categorizing the above areas, Board members chose 3 areas to tackle over the next 12 months. They are:

Top 3 Priority Areas

Montana Career Clusters and Big Sky Pathways	Apprenticeship Promotion and Expansion	Expansion of Incumbent Worker Training and New Worker Customized Training Programs
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Two areas remained: 1) Promoting Work Readiness; and 2) Promoting Vocational Education in Middle Schools. The SWIB considers these important to Montana’s ability to adequately prepare jobseekers for good jobs, and to provide skilled workers for Montana’s industries. The Board agreed, however, that “Promoting Work Readiness” is

a topic that will be likely incorporated into work to be done within the Top 3 Areas shown above. They also agreed that when weighing readiness for change (i.e. existing movement, potential energy, possible “big impact”), the Career Clusters/Pathways area warranted more immediate attention than “Voc Ed in Middle Schools,” an area seen as a potential near-future priority once the Clusters and Pathways priority areas were strengthened and implemented.

Desired Goals and Impacts in Each of 3 Priority Areas

With agreement on the three areas for action over the next 12 months, the Board brainstormed the 12-month goals and longer term impacts they hoped to achieve in each area. These included:

Montana Career Clusters and Big Sky Pathways <i>12-Month Goal: Mechanisms to ensure alignment of Clusters and Pathways with the priority needs of Montana’s private sector.</i> <i>Rationale: Relevancy of programs to students and industry.</i>	
<i>If the SWIB takes action in this priority area, what do we want as short- and long- term results?</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of Growth Industries • Alignment across systems (workforce development, economic development, K-12, Higher Education, Business) • Identification of skills needed (Skills Standards) across high demand occupations in growth industries • Increased entry into priority industries and jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-College alignment of curriculum • Identification of new and existing \$ • Articulation of new legislation • Increased Awareness of industries, jobs, pathways by students, teachers, parents, communities • Businesses are involved in design of curriculum and in awareness campaigns about careers
Apprenticeship Promotion and Expansion <i>12-Month Goal: A comprehensive statewide Apprenticeship marketing plan.</i> <i>Rationale: The model works but is not at a scale to achieve impact needed in priority and non-traditional industries.</i>	
<i>If the SWIB takes action in this priority area, what do we want as short- and long- term results?</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A written marketing plan • 20+ new, non-traditional programs • Uncover barriers to enrollment; redesign incentives to overcome barriers • Increase % of women apprentices • Connect to regional needs more effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address support services where needed • Find and deliver new, innovative ways to deliver training • Uncover barriers to retention and completion; redesign incentives to overcome barriers

Incumbent and New Worker Customized Training <i>12-Month Goal: Expand IWT Pilot across the state, while aligning and bolstering NWCT.</i> <i>Rationale: These programs have shown results, are ready to serve businesses, but need marketing and expansion to realize potential impact.</i>	
<i>If the SWIB takes action in this priority area, what do we want as short- and long- term results?</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take pilot IWT programs statewide • Expand on lessons learned from new worker customized training in WIRED • Identify new careers for older workers and retraining needed • Identify barriers to participating in training for specific populations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify resources that are new and/or that can be leveraged • New or modified language for appropriations and legislation • Connect to other opportunities, such as apprenticeships • Education, marketing, messaging about programs

The remainder of the meeting focused on brainstorming, discussion and planning for the next 12 months within these 3 priority areas. The result is presented in the attached Excel Plan of Action.

I look forward to next steps, and hope this is helpful information. As I've mentioned before, call me at any point at 509-826-7991, or I am of course available by email at lwoolsey@skilledwork.org.